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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT NO.

CD NO.

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Bolivia

DATE DISTR. 23 May 1950

SUBJECT MNR-PIR Revolutionary Attempt on 19 May 1950

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1. On 19 May 1950 Movimiento Nacional Revolucionaria elements and Communist sympathizers took advantage of the disturbances accompanying the general strike which began on 13 May to combine in a revolutionary attempt to overthrow the Bolivian government. The attempt was put down by the army and police on the evening of the same day. The total number killed since the violence began is believed to be 140, including approximately 25 troops, and the injured 400, as opposed to the official government statement of 12 killed.
2. There was a pitched battle in the factory section of La Paz between the army carabineros and MNR and alleged Communist elements beginning early on 19 May. The army succeeded in defeating the rebels and gaining complete control of the factory section on the evening of 19 May. Approximately eighty persons were killed, including a few troops.
3. At 7:30 p.m. on 19 May the army took possession of the La Paz university where Partido de la Izquierda Revolucionaria (PIR) leaders Ricardo Anaya, Jose Antonio Arze and Carlos Mendizabal had moved their headquarters. Jose Pereira was arrested, but Ricardo Anaya, Jose Antonio Arze, and Carlos Mendizabal were still being sought by the police. Approximately three hundred students had been furnished arms by Alfredo Suarez and organized by Pereira and Sergio Almaraz, reportedly on orders from Anaya and Arze. The students had smuggled numerous arms left from the 1946 revolution into the university building for possible use against the army.
4. Two army regiments were moved from Gunqui and Cochabamba to reinforce the two regiments already in La Paz to maintain order. It was reported, but not confirmed, on 20 May that the Gunchi regiment was suspected of having made plans to switch to the side of the rebels. A MNR plan to assault the presidential palace late on the evening of 19 May was not carried out because of the presence of additional troops.
5. It was also reported on 19 May that a military cabinet had been chosen to take over the government but as of 20 May there had been no cabinet changes.

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